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A grace of contrast, take fire and burn  
 Like splinters of touchwood, whose edges a mould  
 Of ashes o'erfeathers; northward turn  
 For an instant, and let your eye grow cold  
 On Agamemnon, and when once more  
 You look, 'tis as if the land-breeze, growing,  
 From the smouldering brands the film were blowing,  
 And brightening them down to the very core;  
 Yet they moment by cool, and dampen, and deaden,  
 The crimson turns golden, the gold turns leaden,  
 Hardening into one black bar,  
 O'er which, from the hollow Heaven afar,  
 Shoots a splinter of light like diamond,  
 Half seen, half fancied; by and by,  
 Beyond whatever is most beyond,  
 In the uttermost waste of desert sky,  
 Grows a star;  
 And over it, visible spirit of dew—  
 Ah! stir not, speak not, hold your breath,  
 Or surely the miracle varnisheth—  
 The new moon, tranced in unspeakable blue!

In "The Vision of Sir Launul" are some passages expressing most gloriously the poet's enjoyment of the sunny soul of nature:—

"And what is so rare as a day in June?  
 Then, if ever, come perfect days;  
 Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,  
 And over it softly her warm ear lays:  
 Whether we look, or whether we listen,  
 We hear life murmur, and see it glisten;  
 Every clod feels a stir of might,  
 An instinct within it that reaches and towers,  
 And, grasping blindly above it for light,  
 Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers.

"The crows flapped over by twos and threes;  
 In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees,  
 The little birds sang, as if it were  
 The one day of summer in all the year,  
 And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:  
 The castle alone in the landscape lay  
 Like an outpost of winter, dull and grey."

Yet there are a few passages in which he seems to have sat down to study foregrounds, as the description of a stone wall with its surroundings; and, by the way, this forms one of the most available foreground incidents in our cultivated landscape, and one which might be used to greater advantage by our artists than it is:—

"O'er yon low wall, which guards one unkempt zone,  
 Where vines, and weeds, and scrub-oaks intertwine,  
 Safe from the plough, whose rough, discordant stone,  
 Is massed to one soft grey by lichens fine,  
 The tangled blackberry, crossed and recrossed, weaves,  
 A prickly network of ensanguined leaves;  
 Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-alders shine."

I should judge that Lowell was neither botanist nor geologist, and, indeed, cared little for the forms in which nature manifested herself to him, except when some particular association endears a passage of scenery to him. Thus he paints well a scene on the River Charles, which runs in sight of his birth-place:—

"Below, the Charles—a stripe of nether sky,  
 Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,  
 Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps bellying by,  
 Now flickering golden through a woodland screen,  
 Then spreading out at his next turn beyond,  
 A silver circle, like an inland pond—  
 Slips seaward silently through marshes purple and green."

If it were possible for a poet to do anything well at the desire of another, I wish that Lowell would dive deeper into the grasses and ferns, and enjoy more heartily the perfection of the individual form. He loves the violet and dandelion, but only

from human association; and in his poems to them they do not seem to be regarded as a portion of the landscape. I do not know if it were possible to find in one mind the free love of the sentiment of nature which he has, and the thoughtful regarding of the simplest weed which characterizes Bryant's November:—

"One smile on the brown hills and naked trees  
 And the dark rocks whose summer wreaths are cast,  
 And the blue gentian flower, that, in the breeze,  
 Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last."

I have never seen the qualities united in a painter: it were, perhaps, as reasonable to expect to find Titian and Raphael united, as the phenomenal and *formal*\* in perfection in one poet.

G. M. JAMES.

#### THE WILDERNESS AND ITS WATERS.

##### CHAPTER II.

###### A FOREST EPISODE.

THE eastern sky was grey and clear when awaking from excited sleep I looked out of my six-paned window. There was promise of a glorious day in the serene heavens and quiet air; and shaking off my dreams, I walked out into the morning light. There was a slight frost on the grass, and it sounded crisply under my feet. The lake was spread out before me, broken by islands, and veiled by a thin blue vapor which rose from its surface, and spread out like a sheet of snow, concealing all reflections. The islands were rugged, rocky prominences jutting out of this blue and white expanse, covered by trees, above which, eminent, stood tall gaunt pines, in the top of one of which croaked a raven—no bird of omen for us, however. All was wild and solitary. A little clearing around the cabin where we had passed the night, dotted with black stumps, opened a space to the lake-shore—all else was forest, unbroken. A couple of cows tinkled their bells within the little grazing space allowed them by the length of the ropes, by which they were confined, each to a stump. Beyond was a patch of Indian corn and a field of oats, late ripened, and now just turning yellow. A flock of barn-yard fowls ran everywhere they pleased; and by the side of a log-shed, a young bear gambolled in his chain within friendly distance of a grave looking hound, who lay, with his head on his paws, looking off on the lake. I walked to the landing where our boat lay, dipped my face into the lake, and returned to rouse my companions, just as the sun which had been warming the grey of the sky to a golden yellow, burst above the hills. The light fell on the vapor, waking it to undulations, and making it lift in wreaths and flakes, and gradually it floated up and melted away.

The frost dissolved on the sunny sides of the little hummocks of grass, leaving their shadows as blue, seemingly, as the sky over-head. The blue-jays sailed screaming around in search of the grasshopper and crickets, which the sun had warmed out; and the chickens, too, raced after the hapless few who ventured to try their stiffened wings.

In the cabin, all was astir. The men-folks were absent on an expedition, except

one of the young men; but Mother J. had busied herself early with getting our breakfast, and we were discussing it before the frost was all off the grass. This duty finished, we lazily strolled out into the sunlight. Not a breath of wind was stirring, and two or three long streaks of cirrus, apparently left there from the display of the last evening, swept across the firmament. The slightest possible haze lay on the hills beyond the lake, and the trees were in that early change of foliage when the greens grow yellow and rich, as though bringing out, in their autumn need, the sunlight they had been drinking in through the summer.

The various firs made masses of dark green here and there; and just at the summit of the hills, where they rolled back to the blue mountains, the crimson and pale yellow began to steal in. The lake lay in perfect glassy quiet. We walked down to the landing, and threw ourselves at length on the grass where the meadow sloped down to the water. The minnows were gliding around through the maze of rushes and lily pads, huddling and scattering alternately, and occasionally breaking the surface with their tiny leap at the insects. Some immense yellow frogs lay half out of the water, resting on the lily leaves, and eyed us unintermittingly. Out on the lake a pair of loons swam, diving and reappearing, and with their shrill cry breaking the otherwise entire silence that prevailed. For an instant, the water far out would be ruffled, as if by a breeze, by the schools of minnows that had ventured out into the deeper water, and were pursued by the lake trout, whose leap and splash followed their fearful flurry.

We deliberated on our next step forward, for we were now but half-way to our fishing grounds. It was yet thirty miles to the best localities for trout. We had found, by inquiring of the son of our hostess, whom we engaged as one of our guides, that there was a good bark shanty six miles on, and excellent fishing near by. We concluded to go as far as that and stop for the night, fishing at day-break, and, after breakfast, pursuing our journey. Returning to the cabin to make our preparations, we dispatched "Bill" for another guide who lived three miles down the lake, and ordered dinner at twelve. Angler wanted to make some flies, such as he had found to be the most killing by the previous day's fishing—Student wanted to go into the woods, and so, the former undoing his traps, the latter shouldered his fowling-piece, and he and I wandered off. There was a light wagon track, only two ruts in the turf, leading back to the forest. The maize stood tall on one hand, just shrivelled by the slight first frosts, which had wilted the pumpkin vines down, and left the sunflowers towering black and dead over the patch of prostrate melon vines by the well-curb. On the other side of the path was a wide field of oats, above the heads of which now and then a blackened stump reared itself. The road led us to a "pair of bars" in the huge pile of fallen trees that served as a fence to keep the cattle from coming into the grain, after they had been turned loose in the woods. A zone of blackened, half dead trees marked the limit of the burning by which the land had been placed in a tillable condition. Some prostrate

\* I use the word in an incorrect sense, because by its parallelism it expresses what I mean, better than any I know.

trunks cumbered the ground, and some, burnt off at mid-height, still left hollows where the squirrels hid their harvest, or, perchance, an owl dozed the day away.

There would have been little need, I thought, for hollow trees if he had only passed beyond the black region into the cool, deep shade of the primeval forest. There was little underbrush, and, leaving the wagon-track, which led back to some neighbor's cabin deep in the woods, we plunged into the trackless wilderness. Hardly anything but mosses grew in the shade of the dense trees. The witch hopple, with its broad grey-green leaves, was the only shrub which throve to any great extent; and the young maples and beeches that sprung up in profusion, grew frail and slender, pining and aspiring to the light which glimmered above. Huge bowlders of granite were covered with moss like a rich carpet. Crumbling tree trunks lay around in all stages of decay, and broken with brown and yellow fungi. There were some immense pine trees which shot up into the upper sky out of our range of vision, like immense columns supporting the green roof over us. Some were fifty, sixty feet without a limb. I measured one that was 17 1-2 feet in circumference six feet above the ground. Birches and maples, three and four feet in diameter, ran up, sometimes straight as a lance, and sometimes again knotted and gnarled and locked together. We struck a run-way, and, following its guidings, walked on in converse of Art and its mysteries. The whirr of a partridge aroused the sportsman in our Student, but too late to get a shot, so stealthily creeping after the timid bird, he left me to wait the result of his venture.

I sat down on a newly-fallen beech, and leaning against a near trunk, gave myself up to reverie. The waste of green around me was unbroken. Here and there some maple leaves gently quivered, and the sunlight that came through the openings in the foliage above, glittered and glimmered down through the trees, now sleeping on the moss and then flitting to and fro, as the wind, which now came up in fitful breaths, moved the veil overhead. A few flies and mosquitoes, which the chilly nights had spared, came out in the day's warmth and buzzed merrily around. No other living thing was visible or audible. I watched the flakes of sun-gold that moved gently hither and thither in the dead leaves, searching for some forms of life, warming and working into being the dormant energies of a future growth; and listened for sounds which my own thoughts, weary with waiting in vain for, called up and animated the scene with. Imaginary voices far off claimed attention, but were heard not again. A multitudinous murmur, which seemed to come from all living things, was in my ears, and grew louder and more significant, but when I questioned closer, it was once more only a ringing in my ears. A little deer-mouse came out from a decayed stump, looked at me, and after a moment of anxiety seemed to become satisfied that I was harmless, and went forth on his quest.

Next a red squirrel came running along the tree on which I sat, until within a few feet of me, when he took fright and darted up a tree, barking most spitefully all the time. Then all was silent again, until the report of Student's gun at a distance dis-

turbed the place, and shortly he approached with his game, and guided by the run-way, we turned back.

It was nearly noon when we reached the cabin. Angler had finished his flies, and was making a sketch of the surroundings. The other guide had come, and both were busy cleaning out the boats, and getting the provisions and camp traps in order to start. Dinner was announced, and with appetites increased wonderfully since we had left the settlements, we discussed the last meal we should eat in some days in a civilized manner.

*The Poetry of Architecture; or the Architecture of the Nations of Europe, considered in its Association with Natural Scenery and National Character.* By JOHN RUSKIN.

#### No. II. THE COTTAGE.—CONTINUED.

#### 4. THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE.—WESTMORELAND.

WHEN I devoted so much time to the consideration of the peculiarities of the Swiss cottage, I did not previously endeavor to ascertain what the mind, influenced by the feelings excited by the nature of its situation, would be induced to expect, or disposed to admire. I thus deviated from the general rule, which I hope to be able to follow out; but I did so, only because the subject of consideration was incapable of fulfilling the expectation when excited, or corresponding with the conception when formed. But now, in order to appreciate the beauty of the Westmoreland cottage, it will be necessary to fix upon a standard of excellence, with which it may be compared.

One of the principal charms of mountain scenery is its solitude. Now, just as silence is never perfect or deep without motion, solitude is never perfect without some vestige of life. Even desolation is not felt to be utter, unless in some slight degree interrupted: unless the cricket is chirping on the lonely hearth, or the vulture soaring over the field of corpses, or the one mourner lamenting over the red ruins of the devastated village, that devastation is not felt to be complete. The anathema of the prophet does not wholly leave the curse of loneliness upon the mighty city, until he tells us that "the satyr shall dance there." And, if desolation, which is the destruction of life, cannot leave its impression perfect without some interruption, much less can solitude, which is only the absence of life, be felt without some contrast. Accordingly, it is, perhaps, never so perfect as when a populous and highly cultivated plain, immediately beneath, is visible through the rugged ravines, or over the cloudy summits of some tall, vast, and voiceless mountain. When such a prospect is not attainable, one of the chief uses of the mountain cottage, paradoxical as the idea may appear, is to increase this sense of solitude. Now, as it will only do so when it is seen at a considerable distance, it is necessary that it should be visible, or, at least, that its presence should be indicated, over a considerable portion of surrounding space. It must not, therefore, be too much shaded with trees, or it will be useless; but if, on the contrary, it be too conspicuous on the open hill-side, it will be liable to most of the objections which were advanced against the Swiss cottage,

and to another, which was not then noticed. Anything which, to the eye, is split into parts, appears less as a whole than what is undivided. Now, a considerable mass, of whatever tone or color it may consist, is as easily divisible by dots as by lines; that is, a conspicuous point, on any part of its surface, will divide it into two portions, each of which will be individually measured by the eye, but which will never make the impression which they would have made, had their unity not been interrupted. A conspicuous cottage on a distant mountain-side has this effect in a fatal degree, and is, therefore, always intolerable. It should, accordingly, in order to reconcile the attainment of the good, with the avoidance of the evil, be barely visible: it should not tell as a cottage on the eye, though it should on the mind; for be it observed, that, if it is only by the closest investigation that we can ascertain it to be a human habitation, it will answer the purpose of increasing the solitude quite as well as if it were evidently so; because this impression is produced by its appeal to the thoughts, not by its effect on the eye. Its color, therefore, should be as nearly as possible that of the hill on which, or the crag beneath which, it is placed: its form, one that will incorporate well with the ground, and approach that of a large stone more than of anything else. The color will consequently, if this rule be followed, be subdued and greyish, but rather warm; and the form, simple, graceful, and unpretending. The building should retain the same general character on a closer examination. Everything about it should be natural, and should appear as if the influences and forces which were in operation around it had been too strong to be resisted, and had rendered all efforts of art to check their power, or conceal the evidence of their action, entirely unavailing. It cannot but be an alien child of the mountains; but it must show that it has been adopted and cherished by them. This effect is only attainable by great ease of outline, and variety of color; peculiarities which, as will be presently seen, the Westmoreland cottage possesses in a supereminent degree.

Another feeling, with which one is impressed during a mountain ramble, is humility. I found fault with the insignificance of the Swiss cottage, because "it was not content to sink into a quiet corner, and personify humility." Now, had it not been seen to be pretending, it would not have been felt to be insignificant; for the feelings would have been gratified with its submission to, and retirement from, the majesty of the destructive influences, which it rather seemed to rise up against in mockery. Such pretension is especially to be avoided in the mountain cottage: it can never lie too humbly in the pastures of the valley, nor shrink too submissively into the hollows of the hills; it should seem to be asking the storm for mercy, and the mountain for protection; and should appear to owe to its weakness, rather than to its strength, that it is neither overwhelmed by the one, nor crushed by the other.

Such are the chief attributes, without which a mountain cottage cannot be said to be beautiful. It may possess others, which are objectionable or desirable, according to their situation, or other accidental circumstances. The nature of these will be best understood by examining an individual